Increase in infiltration of foreign nationals

1087. SHRIMATI GURCHARAN KAUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the statement made by the Chief of Army Staff that there has been increase in infiltration of foreign nationals;

(b) if so, whether Government have made any survey in this regard; if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the number of estimated foreign national overstaying/ illegally staying in the country?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The Chief of Army Staff during his press briefing on 11.1.2002 on the eve of Army Day, had stated that the number of foreign terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir had gone up over the years. It is assessed that about 2500—3000 terrorists are presently operating in Jammu and Kashmir, of which about 60%—70% are foreign nationals.

(c) As per the available information upto the year 2000, the number of foreign nationals over staying and illegally in the country are 52987 and 41461 respectively.

Indian PoW in Pakistan

†1088. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian Prisoners of War promised to be released by Pakistan in exchange of release of 9300 Pakistani Prisoners of War captured during 1971 war;

(b) whether it is a fact that despite above promise 54 Indian Prisoners of War are yet to reach their country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) the concrete steps proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) During the 1971 war, 532 Indian soldiers were taken Prisoners of War by Pakistan. All these soldiers have been repatriated to India. Subsequently, Government were informed about 54 missing Indian soldiers who are believed to be in Pakistani jails. The Government has consistently taken up the issue of their release and repatriation with the Government of Pakistan at all levels. During the Agra Summit on 15.7.2001 also, Prime Minister urged the Pakistani President to take urgent and purposeful action towards the release of these PoWs.

Pakistan has never acknowledged the presence of any PoW in its custody. Following the Agra Summit in July last year, Government of Pakistan reportedly conducted another search for Indian PoWs but again reiterated that there was no Indian PoW in Pakistani jails. Government would continue to take up this issue with the Government of Pakistan.

Equipping coast guard to meet new challenges of maritime zones

1089. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that with the increasing security threat at sea besides country's growing sea frontiers, Government have reviewed the existing resources and equipment available to the force for its effective maritime operations;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what measures have been taken by Government to equip the coast guard to meet the new challenges in the country's maritime zones?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government have reviewed the existing resources and equipment available to the Coast Guard to effectively meet the